

**MEMO TO:** House Finance Members

**MEMO FROM:** J. Michael Downey, President, RI Council 94, AFSCME, AFL-CIO  
Steve Shears, President, Local 314, Rhode Island Training School  
Alexis Santoro, Esq., Executive Director, RI Council 94, AFSCME, AFL-CIO  
Jim Cenerini, Legislative Affairs/Political Action Coordinator/Sr. Staff Rep.  
Nicole H.B. Barnard, Attorney/Sr. Staff Rep., RI Council 94, AFSCME, AFL-CIO

**DATE:** April 28, 2021

**RE:** FY 2022 DCYF Departmental Budget -- Oppose

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RI Council 94, AFSCME, AFL-CIO opposes some of the proposed changes at the Rhode Island Training School (RITS). The current proposal would seek to privatize the work done to rehabilitate girls at the RITS and it also seeks to eliminate nine (9) FTEs. Council 94 maintains that a new plan should be created which keeps all of the mods open, staff employed and seeks to enhance the kinds of rehabilitation performed by our members at the Training School. For youth who are in crisis and represent a harm to themselves or others, the Training School is a secure facility where they can receive medical care, psychological counseling, education and rehabilitation in addition to remaining safe.

In FY 2020, the State of RI DCYF spent approximately \$87.2 million on private Temporary Community Placements (TCPs) in FY 2020. The "Governor's Report for Working Group for Juvenile and Criminal Justice 01 10 2020" shows that juveniles at the RITS improved their educational learning, making 4.8 years of progress in Math in a year and 3.8 years of progress in Reading in 1 year. Research Improving People's Lives Research Report 11-08-2018" states that, "It appears that RITS Only youth have better observed health, education, enrollment, and recidivism outcomes than TCP only."

We feel that these metrics are all very significant and should be considered when deciding what is actually best for R.I. youth. The RITS has shown it does rehabilitation better than the TCPs and therefore should have its programming considerably expanded to provide programs such as creating a Youth Transition Program, a Female Youth Treatment Milieu and a Youth Shelter, instead of cutting the budget and sending them to private settings.